

New Jersey
2002 Fruit Summary
2000, 2001 and Preliminary 2002

Five major fruit and berry crops grow in the Garden State: apples, blueberries, cranberries, peaches and strawberries. During the 2002 growing season, cold spring weather and drought conditions during the summer months significantly reduced the apple and peach production. There was no weather damage to berry crops despite the minor frost damage to blueberry blooms. Rainfall during the later part of September was too late to benefit the fruit crops.

Total production of the five fruit and berry crops during 2002 amounted to 185 million pounds, down 18 percent from 2001's production of 226 million pounds. Value of utilized production of the above crops totaled \$89.9 million, a gain of \$6.20 million from the 2001 total of \$83.7 million.

During 2002 among all major fruit and berry producing states in the nation, New Jersey ranked second in blueberry production; third in cranberry production; fourth in peach production; and seventeenth in apple production. Crops by value of production within the state resulted in blueberries rated first with \$46.8 million. Peaches ranked second with \$25.2 million, while cranberries ranked third with \$11.0 million. Apples and strawberries ranked fourth and fifth with \$4.83 million and \$2.08 million, respectively.

Early spring frost had significantly damaged apple and peach blossoms. Only a few orchards located in higher elevations were able to avoid frost damage. Unfavorable growing conditions adversely affected apple and peach production. Some orchards abandoned their apple crop completely due to sizing problems. Peach utilized production totaled 57.0 million pounds, down 13.0 million pounds from 2001. Apple production dropped 36% to 35.0 million pounds. Value of utilized production was \$4.83 million and \$25.2 million for apples and peaches, respectively. Both values are down from a year ago.

The value of utilized production for the 2002 blueberry and cranberry crop was \$46.8 million and \$11.0 million, respectively. The blueberry crop's bloom set was average despite some frost damage. Blueberry production, a record high, totaled 43.0 million pounds, an increase of 13 percent. Cranberry harvest was hindered in some areas due to low reservoir levels caused by lack of rainfall. Cranberry production was 430,000 barrels, down 24 percent from 566,000 barrels produced in 2001.